

JOYFUL HOMES AREN'T PERFECT,

They listen.

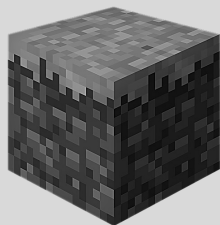


One of the deepest desires of the human heart is to know and be known. Families are the ideal place for this need to be met, and we do this by listening to each other. Listening is a skill that most of us have room to grow in... because it's not always easy! We live in a busy, noisy world, but time invested in listening well will pay dividends for years to come!

As a family, discuss:

- Who do you know who is a good listener? What are some things they do (or don't do) that help you know they are paying close attention to you?
- How does it feel when someone really listens to you?
- When it comes to listening, what do we, as a family, do well? Where can we improve?

“YOU CAN ALWAYS
COME
TO ME.”



Listening to hours of talk about Minecraft, football or Disney Channel may not be any

parent's favorite pastime, but taking an interest in what interests your kids sets you up for success later when they have more serious things on their minds.

Likewise, how we react to messes—literal or figurative—teaches kids how we will react when they come to us with something difficult.

Eye contact, a good question, and a calm response (or a sincere apology) can help convince our kids that they *really can* always come to us!

Pick one practice this month!

- Give the gift of your full attention when someone is speaking: screens off, eye contact, avoid formulating your response while listening.
- Go beyond “How was your day?” More descriptive questions can help draw out your loved ones: What made you laugh today? What do you need prayers for? Where did you see God today? What was your high/low of the day?
- Create space for listening in the rhythm of family life. Family dinner, shared chores or errands with one family member at a time, radio/earbud-free car rides, or an agenda-free evening at home won't always invite deep sharing, but they provide opportunities for your kids or spouse to bring something up.

Scripture of the month: James 1:19

Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger.

Am I quicker to listen, speak or grow angry?

Want more ideas and encouragement? www.archkcks.org/listen